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A

PIOUS

AND

Christian Consideration

OF

LIFE and *DEATH*,

AND

Of all HUMANE ACTIONS.

Written Originally in *French* by the Famous *Philip Morney* Lord of *Plessis*.

Translated into *Latin* by *Arnoldus Freitagius*.

And now done into *English* by *M. A.* for the benefit of his Countrymen.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A GODLY AND Chriſtian Conſideration OF Life *and* Death.

IT ſeemeth to me a thing worthy of great wonder and amazement, and not unlike a Paradox, when I conſider how all ſorts of Workmen and Mercenary People riſe up early, and labour hard all the day, in hopes to enjoy their deſired reſt at night; how Mariners tug at the Oar with all their might, that they may gain their port; and with what ſigns of joy, with what ſhouts and acclamations, they behold the ſhore, though at a diſtance: How Travellers, deſpiſing the allurements of Life, think no-

thing more pleaſant than to attain their Journeys end. Only we, who are engaged in the labours and trouble of this World, are ſoon tired therewith, and though we be toſſed with the waves of this troubleſome Sea, and worn out with hard and painful Travel, yet are we unwilling to ſee the end of our labours; we cannot without tears think of coming to our ſafe and ſecure Harbour, nor without fear and trembling, of entring into a quiet retirement. This our Life is much like *Penelope*'s Web, which was daily to be woven and unwoven. It is a Sea expoſed to Winds and Storms, with which ſometimes the outward, ſometimes the inward Man is miſerably toſſed; it is a Journey in which we muſt expect to meet with hard Froſts, and deep Snows, in which we muſt travel through craggy Rocks, dreadful Precipices, vaſt Wilderneſſes, and be daily in danger to be aſſaulted by Thieves and Robbers. Let us daily meditate of theſe things, and of theſe things let us commune with our own hearts, and let us thus tug at the Oar that we may gain our Port. But when we ſee Death draw nigh, and offering us an helping hand to refreſh us who are wearied with Labour, to put an end to all our grief and ſorrow, to bring

bring us into a ſafe Haven, after ſo dangerous a Journey, and inſtead of ſuch troubleſome Inns, to lodge us ſafely in our own Houſe; inſtead of Joy and Rejoycing thereat, inſtead of a Swan-like Song, we are more willing (if the Fates would allow it) to repeat our former Labours, reiterate our former Voyage, and once more truſt our ſelves to the tumultuous and tempeſtuous Sea of this World; we are willing to forget all our former miſeries, all our ſhipwrecks, and all that danger of Thieves and Robbers that we have been in; and to look upon Death as our greateſt puniſhment, much greater than all thoſe dangers and misfortunes that we have undergone, or can poſſibly befall us in this Life. We act like Children, who, though they have ſpent whole days in tears, yet upon the approach of a Phyſician, will not own that they are ſick: Not unlike thoſe, who being miſerably afflicted with the Tooth-ach, ſpend whole days and nights in bewailing their miſery, yet upon the ſight of a Chirurgeon, who offers to pull out their faulty tooth, deny that they have any pain at all. We act much like thoſe delicate ones, who being afflicted with an acute Pleuriſie, ſend forth moſt miſerable groans, and can ſcarce

have patience to ſtay the coming of a Chirurgeon; yet when he is come, and come to remove their Malady, they no ſooner ſee him make ready his Inſtrument, but they draw back their Arm, and hide themſelves within their Bed, as if he were about to kill them. We fear the Phyſician more than the Diſeaſe, the Chirurgeon than the pain, Inciſion than Suppuration. We have a quicker ſenſe of the bitterneſs and momentany trouble of a Medicine, than of the cruelty of a long and tedious Diſeaſe; we are more afraid of the end of our miſery, than the continuance of thoſe evils, which we do and muſt daily ſuffer in this World. Now whence comes it that we are thus mad and ſtubborn? but only from hence, that we do not rightly underſtand what Death is. Hence is it that we are afraid of thoſe things which we ought to hope for, and deſire thoſe things which we ought to be afraid of. We call that Life, which is a continual dying, and we call that Death, which is an Exit out of that ſtate of continual dying, and an entrance into Eternal Life. Furthermore, what is there in Life that is ſo greatly to be deſired? Or what is there in Death that is ſo greatly to be feared?

Let

Let us examine the ſeveral periods of our whole Life.

We enter into life weeping and wailing, we go through it toiling and ſweating, and we go out of it decaying and languiſhing. There is no difference between high and low, Noble and Ignoble, in this they are all alike, they muſt all ſubmit to this Condition of Life, none can plead an exemption therefrom. The Condition of Man therefore is much worſe than that of other living Creatures, being born and brought forth into this light, he cannot remove himſelf from the place where he is. The firſt years of his Infancy are void of all pleaſure, yea ſo far therefrom that he is troubleſom both to himſelf and others, and even to thoſe years in which Reaſon and Judgment begin to bud he is expoſed to infinite dangers. In this one thing that period of time is more happy than the reſt, that he doth not underſtand his own unhappineſs. Now is there any of ſo abject and baſe a Mind, that he would willingly chuſe to live always in this ſtate of Infancy? Whence it is plain, that if we take an eſtimate of Life as it is in it ſelf and in its own nature, there is nothing deſirable therein, but only to live well and happily.

The miſeries of each ſeveral Age.

1. *Of Infancy.*

2. *Childhood.* But let us proceed. Together with the growth and increaſe of the Body trouble and ſorrow increaſe too. No ſooner is he freed from the hands of his Nurſe, and before he knows what pleaſure there is in Play, he is committed to the diſcipline of a School-Maſter, (I ſpeak of thoſe who are more liberally Educated) whilſt he is at Play, he is in fear; whilſt he is at his Book, it is grievous and unpleaſant to him. All that period of time which is ſpent under the tuition of another, is no better nor worſe in his eſteem than a Priſon. He thinks of nothing elſe, nor aſpireth at any thing more, than how he may arrive at thoſe years, in which he may be free from the government and reſtraint of others, and live at liberty. This is his great and only care, that he may quickly ſee an end of his Infant-ſtate, and be admitted into another of more freedom.

3. *Adoleſcence.* The entrance into this State, what is it elſe but the deſtruction of Infancy? What is Manhood, but the death of Youth? What is the riſing of to morrow, but the ſetting of this day? If therefore we rightly conſider the thing, when Men deſire a change of their Condition, they deſire Death, and judge their preſent State unhappy; they

they are diſcontented with their preſent Condition, and therefore cannot be happy in it.

Now let us conſider Man in that Age which he hath ſo greatly longed for, *i. e.* an Age of freedom and liberty; wherein he may walk either in ways of Virtue, or Vice, and chuſe what Guide he pleaſeth therein, either Reaſon, or Paſſion. Now having two ways before him, he is at a ſtand which to chuſe. Paſſion greatly Courts him, endeavours with a thouſand baits to allure him, propounds a thouſand kinds of worldly pleaſure to bewitch him. But at length what are thoſe delights? they are wicked and vicious, ſuch as vex the Mind as it were with a perpetual Fever; they are ſuch as Repentance follows cloſe at the heels; like an Itch, which being allayed with much ſcratching, at laſt the part is exulcerated thereby, and leaveth behind it a long remembrance of pain and grief. Theſe kind of Pleaſures are not acquired without great pains, labour and danger, but in a moment they are gone, and leave the Mind under a long and unquiet remembrance of them. Such are the Pleaſures of this World, and ſuch the Nature of all frail and flitting Vanities. If any one will take the pains fully to examine 4. *Youth.*

examine them, he will find that there are none of them ſeaſoned with ſo much ſweetneſs, which is not only not abated, but overcome by the bitterneſs thereof; none, though never ſo pleaſant to the Palate, but are hurtful to the Stomach, by long uſage becoming nauſeous to him that uſeth them; none (which is the moſt deplorable thing of all) that are ſo well tempered, but that they have ſomething in them, which not only gnaws upon, but deeply wounds the Mind and Conſcience.

I ſhall not now inſiſt upon thoſe inconveniencies which all do confeſs and acknowledge to be in Pleaſures; as Brawlings, Strifes, Fightings, Manſlaughters, Baniſhments, Diſeaſes, and divers Hazards, into which either the incontinency of Life, or the imprudence and inſolence of Youth is wont for the moſt part to precipitate Men.

But if thoſe ſeeming Pleaſures be real troubles, if the grief that attends them, like Wormwood-water allayed, be ſwallowed with them, it will evidently appear what, and what kind of Pleaſure it is, as alſo what ſort of bitterneſs that is, which Men ſuck in together with them. Such generally is unbridled Youth, which having ſhaken off the Patronage, and tranſgreſſed the

the directions of Parents or Maſters, and having looſened the reins of their licentiouſneſs, become Slaves and Vaſſals to all manner of Vice and Wickedneſs. Such licentious Youth may fitly be compared to ſome unclean Spirit poſſeſſing a Man; which ſometimes throws him into the Water, ſometimes into the Fire; ſometimes ſets him up upon a ſteep Precipice, and ſometimes caſts him down to the bottom. But if he take Reaſon for his Guide, Let us conſider what difficulties he hath to encounter with; he muſt ſleep in Armour, and watch with his Weapons in his hand, he muſt be ready every moment to engage his Enemy, becauſe he hath an unwearied Adverſary to deal with, one who will ſometimes aſſault his Head, ſometimes his Side, and ſometimes the lower parts of his Body; and therefore he muſt always be Armed Cap-a-pee. But who is this Enemy? I anſwer, his own Luſts and Corruptions, which flatter and deceive him: He muſt ſtand upon his guard againſt every thing that he ſees, againſt the World and every thing therein, and (which is moſt deplorable) he muſt engage with a thouſand dangerous, erroneous and falſe Opinions of his own, and with many deſperate diſturbances

ſturbances of his Mind, which at that Age Men are moſt ſubject to, and which ſeek all occaſions to oppreſs and ruine him, by engaging him in all manner of Sin and Wickedneſs. It is only our great and good God, that can ſhew us the way out of this Labyrinth, it is he alone, that can give us Victory in theſe Conflicts. But how few are they who enter this Path, and of thoſe few, how many are they who draw back their foot? Now follow whichſoever of theſe ways you pleaſe, you muſt ſtill reckon your ſelves ſubject to the tyrannical power of trouble and diſturbance; you muſt expect to be engaged in great and dangerous Conflicts; either you will voluntarily caſt your ſelves headlong, or in Bonds and Fetters be made Slaves againſt your wills; either you will be carried down with a ſmooth ſtream, or elſe be forced to row againſt Wind and Tide, and meet with Storms and Tempeſts by the way. Some there are who at that Age are ſtupified with full draughts of falſe and vain allurements; not unlike thoſe who at ſome ſumptuous Entertainment drink themſelves drunk, who the next day abhor the former Days Entertainment, and cannot otherwiſe remember it, than with nauſeouſneſs and loathing.

Others

Others there are, who ſeem ſeriouſly to deſpiſe Pleaſures, yet find themſelves ſo wearied and worn out with labour, that they are ready either to yield themſelves to the Enemy; or being quite tired out with the tedionſneſs of a troubleſom Life, to haſten their own Death. Theſe are the Pleaſures of flouriſhing Youth, which Children ſo greatly long for, and which in their riper years they ſo much loath.

Now follows the perfect Age of Man, which we call Manhood; this all Men look upon as Dedicated to Wiſdom, and hope to conſecrate it to a quiet and happy Life. But this conſummate Age, in this one thing, and indeed in all the degrees of Perfection is abſolute; that then the Univerſal imperfection of Humane Nature, which either a ſimple and innocent Infancy covered, or an inconſtant and inconſiderate Youth excuſed, doth firſt ſhow its head, and appears vigorous and perfect. I ſhall paſs by many, and only inſtance in thoſe whom the World eſteems Wiſe and Happy. Hitherto we have been poſſeſſed with fear, and deluded by it; our Pleaſures have been ſhort, our Repentance long, and our Remembrance of them ſad and ſorrowful. Now greater Evils invade and gain the poſ-

5. *Manhood.*

ſeſſion

ſeſſion of our Minds, *viz.* Covetouſneſs and Ambition, which promiſe abundance of Riches and Honour if we will but fall down and worſhip them. Nor is there any Mortal, except the true Children of God, who is not bewitched with the love of one or other of theſe, and by that means falls from the height of Happineſs into the Abyſs of Miſery. But ſuppoſe a Man proſpereth in his deſire, let us conſider what he gets by it.

Covetouſneſs.

The Covetous Man makes a thouſand Voyages and Journeys by Sea and Land, is a thouſand times expoſed to Piracies in the one, and Robberies in the other; and as often to the various Chances of Fortune; with continual fear and labour he eſcapes a thouſand Shipwracks, but ſeldom without great loſs of time, without ſome Diſeaſe, ſome pains or aches in his Joynts or Bones, and at laſt finds his whole Body and all the Members thereof greatly weakned and worn out, partly by thoſe labours, and partly by growing Age. That he may gain eaſe and quiet, he engageth himſelf in buſineſs; that he may get Riches, he denieth himſelf the neceſſaries of Life, and offereth violence to Life it ſelf. Now grant that together with Riches he hath

hath obtained his eaſe, grant that he now rejoyceth in the ſpoils of all the Eaſt, and hath exhauſted the Mines of the Weſt, is he thereby like to be one jot the happier, or more quiet? After all his trouble, coſt and travel, what hath he got? even a great heap of care and ſorrow. He is toſſed from one trouble to another, and yet there is no end of his miſery, but only a change of his Calamity. He hath toiled and ſweat out of an ardent deſire to heap up Riches, and now he labours under great fear and anxiety of Mind leſt he ſhould loſe them again; with a feveriſh ardour he heaped them together, and now he poſſeſſeth them with fear and trembling. He oftentimes expoſed himſelf to the aſſaults of Thieves and Robbers, that he might make them his own; and now he hath got them, he liveth in perpetual fear of Thieves and Robbers, leſt they ſhould take them from him. With great care and pains he took them out of the Bowels of the Earth, and now his great care is, how and where he may ſafely hide them in the Earth again. And to ſay all at once, having finiſhed his whole Journey, he at length finds himſelf a Priſoner; inſtead of thoſe labours and ſorrows

which

which infeſted his Body, he now finds himſelf ſurrounded and attended by infinite troubles and diſturbances of Mind and Spirit. But what hath the poor wretch got for all this pain and labour? Mammon, who is called the God of Covetouſneſs, perſwadeth him by vain illuſions to hope for ſome great and good thing; but it happens to him as it uſually doth to thoſe wicked Men whom he is wont to draw into his Snare, who inſtead of coined Gold, find their hands full of leaves. He now poſſeſſeth that, or rather is poſſeſſed by it, which in its own Nature is of no power nor efficacy; which cannot eaſe, much leſs remove any malady: being in that inferiour to all Herbs and Plants that the Earth produceth. He heaps up vile excrements, he hath put on ſuch a Beaſt-like Nature, that he adorns his head with thoſe things which he ought to tread under his feet. But is his Covetouſneſs thus ſatisfied? By no means, it is ſo far from that, that he is inflamed with greater and ſtronger deſires than before. We commend that Drink which quencheth thirſt, and thoſe Meats which in leaſt quantity nouriſh the Body, and ſtanch Hunger. Theſe things are of that kind, that the more you uſe of them againſt thirſt

and

and hunger, the leſs you quench the one, or ſtanch the other. Covetouſneſs is a Dropſie, an imaginary hunger, an inſatiable appetite or deſire of having much; ſo that we may rather expect to ſee a Covetous Man burſt or break in ſunder in the middle, than to ſee him ſatisfied with Riches. But the worſt of it is, this thirſt, this inſatiable appetite hath taken ſuch deep root in them, that though they have never ſo much plenty, yet ſtill they want that which ſhould ſatisfie their longing. In the middle of Rivers they die with thirſt, in Store-houſes well fraught with proviſions, they periſh with hunger; though they have abundance, they dare not uſe it. They ſeem to enjoy them, though they reap no benefit by them; they have indeed heaped them up, but neither for their own, nor the uſe of others, and therefore cannot be thought to have any thing of that which they poſſeſs, and yet they are grievouſly tormented with the want of what they poſſeſs not. That Proverbial ſaying therefore hath a great deal of truth in it, *viz. A Covetous Man wants what he hath, as well as what he hath not.* Wherefore let us return to the point in hand, which is to demonſtrate, that the acquiſition of thoſe things, which by a

falſe name are called Goods, is nothing elſe but the pain and trouble of the Body; and the poſſeſſion of them for the moſt part, is the burthen of the Soul, which is much more heavy than that of the Body, becauſe the Mind is endued with a much quicker and purer ſenſe than the Body is. Then are they overwhelmed with miſery, when they are ſpoiled of their Goods; when either by Shipwreck, or by Plunder, or by Fire, or by any ſuch like Calamity, they are violently taken out of their hands, and conſumed. Hence is it, that with howling and crying they bewail their loſt goods; hence is it that they ſo macerate themſelves with cares and grief of heart for them, and will not be comforted. No reaſon can prevail with them to believe, that all thoſe things which mortal Men poſſeſs in this World are ſubject to thoſe, or the like misfortunes. They, and their Riches are become ſo much one, that when they are bereaved of their wealth, they think themſelves to be flead alive, and their ſkin pull'd over their ears. By which it comes to paſs, that theſe Men, who have placed all their confidence in theſe trifles, and fixed all their thoughts upon Earth, when once they come to be deſpoiled of them, their hearts ſink within them,

them, and they fall into the ſnares of deſpair, out of which it ſeldom happens that any of them ever eſcapes, and returns to a better and ſounder Mind. But that which ſurpaſſeth all madneſs is, that they think themſelves to have loſt all that which they do not get by Uſury, they account all that as their loſs, and to diminiſh their ſtore, which by ſome unuſual and unlawful way of gain is not added thereunto; and this drives many of them to that height of madneſs, that they conſpire their own death. In a word, the reward which Covetouſneſs beſtoweth upon its Slaves and Clients, is much like that which the Devil beſtoweth upon his, who, after he hath for ſome time indulged and gratified them, at laſt leaves them either in the hands of the Executioner, or makes them become their own Executioners. I paſs by thoſe many prodigious and monſtrous offences, which Covetous Men in heaping up Riches, are wont to enſlave themſelves unto, by the Conſcience of which their Minds, as it were with ſo many Furies, are perpetually vexed and diſturbed. At length it happens, that by this violent exerciſe, in which the much greater part of Mankind do buſie themſelves, the Body is waſted and deſtroyed, the Mind is un-

dermined, and the Soul it ſelf, without any delights or pleaſures of Life, at length miſerably periſheth.

Ambition. Now let us proceed to the conſideration of *Ambition*, which, by too earneſt a deſire of Honour, doth fooliſhly and madly force many, otherwiſe excellent Men, to run counter to all the ways of truth and goodneſs. If in this we hope to find more of happineſs, we are deceived; we ſhall find much leſs. For, as Covetouſneſs, when it recompenſeth all humane labours with ſome vile excrements of the Earth, doth delude them; ſo this feeds men with ſmoak and air, which have as much of vanity in them, as the other of rude and indigeſted matter. Both of them do indeed precipitate Men into ſome deep gulph, but this is by ſo much the more dangerous, by how much the more ſpecious and cautious in deceiving us, by how much at firſt ſight it appears brighter and purer than Covetouſneſs doth. Of this ſort of Men who have dedicated themſelves to Ambition, ſome are in great eſteem with Princes, ſome Command Armies, and every one have their diſtinct degrees of Offices and Dignities. You ſee theſe Men courted by others, and feared by thoſe whom they command; you ſee them ſhining in Purple, in Armour, and

in

in Attalic Veſtments; and that in ſuch ſort, as if all the Delights of this World were prepared for them, and them only. But there are very few, who truly underſtand with what a ponderous weight but one ounce of that vain-glory doth oppreſs them, how much that Courtſhip and veneration coſts them, at how dear a rate they buy but one Ell of thoſe precious Veſtments. Would but Men ſeriouſly ponder theſe things, we ſhould find but few, who at ſuch a price, and with ſo great repentance, would trouble themſelves to ſeek after theſe things. A long and troubleſome ſervitude and obſequiouſneſs is uſually the way to Honour, and when by theſe Means Men have attained thereunto, the remainder of their Lives muſt be expoſed to dangers, out of which they ſeldom eſcape without the loſs of ſome Member, an Arm or a Leg, and this to ſatisfie the pleaſure of their Prince, who more values an hundred perches of ground that lies convenient for him, than a thouſand ſuch Servants, though of known and approved fidelity. That Man is indeed unhappy, who ſerves another by whom he is not beloved; but he is a Fool, who thinks himſelf to be in great eſteem and honour with one who values him ſo little, that for a thing of no value, he

will expoſe him to the danger and hazard of his life.

The Art of Paraſites, and a graphical deſcription of a Court Life.

By Fawning and Flattering moſt Men attain to that height. Theſe Men by a long tract of time have accuſtomed their tongues and hands to ſay or do any thing that may pleaſe the Prince, a thing which no good Man could ever bring his mind unto. Theſe demy-men muſt endure a thouſand injuries, and ſuffer themſelves to be ſpit upon, without reſiſtance or complaint. Though theſe Men ſeem to be very familiar with Princes, and their Companions in their greateſt Pleaſures, yet are they in no better place with them, than the Keepers and Governours of thoſe moſt fierce and moſt untamed Creatures, *viz.* Lions, are with them; who, though they have long waited on them, a thouſand times fed them, and courted them with a thouſand blandiſhments, yet when ever they give them meat, they carefully obſerve this one thing, to withdraw their hands out of their reach, leſt by chance they ſhould lay hold upon them, and ſo pay them the wages of their ſo long miniſtration and attendance. Such uſually is the end of thoſe Courtiers, who by Fawning and Flattery have ſcrewed themſelves into the favour of their Prince.

It

It is a pleaſure to great Men, when they have lifted up one to the height, and find that he is paſt his labour, to tumble him down headlong from that height; if any one in their Service happen to be over-grown with Riches, to ſqueeze him like a ſwell'd Sponge, 'till he hath diſgorged them all again. They are lovers of themſelves, and love only to pleaſe themſelves, and look upon all others as born to be Slaves to them and their Pleaſures. This blind ſort of Courtiers think they have many friends, that they have many who adore them, never conſidering, that as they have feignedly courted others, ſo do theſe counterfeit only a veneration for them. They rather deſpiſe thoſe that are more powerful, and ſeldom open their lips but to their diſgrace; they ſalute their Inferiours, becauſe they have need of them; it is not therefore the Perſon, but his Fortune, his great Place, or his fine Apparel that they reverence. But Equals (inſtead of that Friendſhip that ought to be eminent between them) do continually vex themſelves with mutual hatred, calumny, treachery, and perpetual envy at one anothers proſperity. You ſee then, that theſe Men are void of all friendſhip, which among wiſe and good Men is judged to be the greateſt

The diſpoſition of Princes towards their Court Servants.

good that is to be found among Mortals. But would you ſee them better painted? When Fortune ſhows the bald part of her head to them, and turns her back of them, they are forſaken of all; when ſhe frowns, every one looks upon them with a ſquint eye. If they happen to be diveſted of their gay Apparel, no body knows them any more. But if theſe Veſtments happen to be beſtowed upon another, though unworthy and infamous, yet he without all controverſie and difficulty, ſhall, by the vertue of this Veſtment, and the Titles thereunto annexed, be made Heir of all thoſe Honours and Dignities which the former once poſſeſſed. They in the mean time ſwell and are proud, not unlike that Aſs of burthen, which carried the Image of the Goddeſs *Iſis*, and ſeeing the Honours which were given to her, thought they were given to him; ſo theſe unthinking Animals, never conſider that they carry their fortune upon their backs, and that it is not unto them, but to that fortune that People pay reſpect and reverence. But you will ſay, whilſt Fortune thus favoureth them, they live happily, and have every thing they can deſire; and he who thus liveth for three or four years more or leſs, cannot be thought unhappy all his Life. If to live

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in perpetual fear of being thrown from that height of Honour into the loweſt degree of Diſgrace, be to live happily, he indeed ſo liveth. If to be always aſpiring to ſomething greater than what he at preſent enjoyeth, *i. e.* to live in continual diſcontent, be to live quietly and at eaſe, then ſuch an one may be ſaid to live ſo. But under that outward Pomp, which you only conſider, you do not know what inward troubles and vexations they carry about with them; Priſons may be ſplendidly built, and look beautiful outward, and yet within be full of deep Dungeons, thick darkneſs, and furniſhed with all manner of Torments. Thoſe who you think do live at large, Inhabiting large and ſtately Houſes, think far otherwiſe of themſelves, they look upon themſelves as too much ſtraitned and confined. Thoſe who in your Opinion are arrived at the higheſt ſtep of Honour and Dignity, in their own opinion are but in a very low and abject ſtate. Some there are who think themſelves afflicted with ſome Diſeaſe, and to be equally as infirm as thoſe who really are ſo; others, who when they may be Princes, yet think no otherwiſe of themſelves than as Pages; and both the one and the other are really what they think themſelves to be. You

ſee

ſee ſome environed with great Troops of Guards, yet how little do they truſt theſe, though deſigned for their ſafety; neither alone nor in Company can they be free from fear. When alone they look behind them, when in Company they look about them. They drink out of maſſie Gold and Silver, but thoſe are the Cups, not thoſe of Earth or Glaſs, out of which poiſoned Potions are wont to be drunk. They lie down upon a ſoft and well-made Bed, and not a Mouſe to be heard, or a Fly to be ſeen, which may diſturb their reſt, yet do they always think they hear ſomething or other, ſo unquiet is their reſt. Whilſt the laborious and weary Peaſant, being void of care, lieth himſelf down by ſome murmuring Brook, making the Earth his Bed, and the Heaven his Canopy, ſleepeth much more ſweetly, and reſts far more quietly than they. Would you ſee the difference between theſe and thoſe who are confined to ſome cloſe and naſty Priſon? Both of them are fettered, the one hath his Body loaden with Iron, the other his Mind clogg'd with Golden Fetters; the Priſoner draws his Chains after him, the Courtier is entangled in his. The fetter'd Priſoner in the midſt of his ſorrow finds comfort, and aſſwageth his grief with a Song;

Song; the Courtier grievouſly tormenteth himſelf, and never releaſeth his Mind from Cares. You are deceived, if you think Courtiers to be at Peace within; you judge them to be in an high and eminent Place, becauſe they are placed in an higher ſtation. But by the ſame way of meaſuring you may make a Dwarf a great Coloſs, if you ſet him upon the top of ſome high Mountain, and meaſure the Statue by its baſis; but this is no good Geometry, for the Statue is to be conſidered in, and meaſured by it ſelf, without any reſpect had to the place whereon it ſtandeth. And if you conſider it ſeparate from its baſis, you will find it but a very ſmall thing. You judge them indeed to be great, (if there be any ſuch thing as greatneſs upon Earth, which it ſelf in reſpect of Heaven is but as a point) but if you could but look into their inward parts, eſpecially thoſe of the Mind, you would not find any ſuch greatneſs there. True greatneſs conſiſts in the contempt of all thoſe vain greatneſſes which we ſee with our eyes, to which theſe Men are Slaves, though they do not think themſelves to be ſo; but it is plain they are ſo, elſe they would not ſo earneſtly and indefatigably renew their endeavours to riſe higher and higher, and never think they

they are high enough. Some there are who propoſe to themſelves a certain Scope, at which if they can once arrive, they covenant with themſelves there to reſt, and enjoy their eaſe. Well, the wiſh'd for Point is attain'd, and yet they can ſcarce allow themſelves a breathing ſpace before they are aſpiring at ſomething more. Every one thinks himſelf in a low Condition, becauſe he ſeeth another in a higher Station than he is: But being ſet up on high, though he cannot be ignorant that there are thouſands, yea myriads of Men who are in a lower Condition than he, yet ſtill aſpires higher; 'till at length either his Spirits fail him, or elſe he is tumbled down from that height into ſome deep Precipice. But if at length, with all his pains and labour he happen to attain to what he aims at, then like thoſe who live upon the top of the Craggy and Snowy *Alps*, he is not only expoſed to Clouds, and Winds, and Hail, and Snow, but alſo to Thundrings and Lightnings, to moſt grievous Storms and Tempeſts, and to an injurious Air; which then aſſault him with a greater power and force; which things partly through fear ſhake the conſtancy of Mens minds, and partly by great and grievous dangers entangle and involve them;

them; which exert all their power and ſtrength againſt the vain and fooliſh arrogance of ſuch Men, and with one flaſh of Lightning not only ſinge all the Plumes of their aſpiring Pride, but reduce them to ſmoak and aſhes. You will perhaps grant me all this, being compell'd ſo to do by the Authority of Examples, of which all Antiquity is full, in which all Hiſtory doth abound. But here it will be objected, That thoſe, without all controverſie, are exempted from all the injurious ſtorms and tempeſts, on whoſe heads Nature her ſelf hath placed a Crown, to whom ſhe hath given a Scepter; whom, from their very Cradles ſhe hath raiſed to ſuch a degree of Honour and Dignity, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that they ſeem to have attained thereunto without any labour or trouble at all. And therefore theſe, if none elſe, may juſtly be ſtiled happy. But the matter may peradventure thus fall out, Theſe being Born and Educated in that height may be leſs ſenſible of difficulties than others are, and that may befall them by Uſe and Cuſtom, which is ſtoried of thoſe who live near the Cataracts of *Nile*, who by the impetuous and rapid falling of thoſe Waters, become deaf. He that hath been accuſtomed to a Priſon, doth not much

much long after liberty; thoſe who among the *Cimmerians* live in perpetual Night and Darkneſs, do not ſo greatly deſire Day; thoſe who live upon the utmoſt top of the *Alps*, do not much regard either the thickneſs of the Snow, or the noiſe of Thunder, or the violence of Storms and Tempeſts, becauſe they are accuſtomed thereunto. Yet are they not exempted therefrom, for, ſometimes it happens that a flaſh of Lightning fadeth the Flower of their Diadem, and daſheth the Scepter out of their hands; ſometimes they are entangled in a great ſtorm of Snow, out of which they do not eſcape without great danger; ſometimes their Minds are not only darkned, but ſtruck blind by a cloud of grief and ſorrow. They are Crowned indeed, but with a Crown of Thorns, they carry a Scepter in their hand, but it is but a Reed, which of all the things in this World is moſt ſubject to be ſhaken with Winds and Tempeſts, and their Crown is ſo far unable to drive away the Lethargy of the Mind, or their Scepter to eaſe their Cares and Troubles, that their very Crown and Scepter it ſelf addeth to their Troubles, and they are miſerably vexed therewith. Hence that Saying of a *Perſian* Monarch. *That no Man would ſtoop to take up a Crown,*

Crown, if he knew the weight of it. But that Prince, though he ſeem to govern the Fortune of the World, and at his will and Pleaſure to diſtribute either Proſperity or adverſity among Mortals, though it be thought to be in his power and his only, to bleſs all Men with the moſt profound Peace and Tranquility; yet will he freely and ingenuouſly confeſs, that in all that World which he governeth, there is nothing elſe to be found, ſave only trouble and misfortune. What do you think would all the reſt ſay, if they would ingenuouſly anſwer thoſe that ask them? I paſs by thoſe who in great trouble and grief of Mind have long out-lived their Kingdoms, the deſtruction whereof they have ſeen with their own eyes, and who after the ruine of all their Royal Pomp and Pageantry have long lived Poor and Miſerable. *Dionyſius* the *Sicilian* Tyrant found more pleaſure and ſatisfaction, when with a Birchen Scepter he governed the Youth of *Corinth*, than ever he did when he wore a Crown, and grievouſly Tyrannized over all *Sicily*. What ſhall I ſay of *Sylla?* who ſo cruelly infeſted the Common-wealth of *Rome* (which was then the Miſtreſs of all the World) with Depredations, he never enjoyed ſo much peace and quiet of Mind, as when of his own

own accord he diveſted himſelf of all Power, Authority, and Dignity. But let us hear the Judgment of King *Solomon*, who, though he was endowed by God with many ſingular Prerogatives, and great Riches; though he had ſearched out the hidden Treaſures of the Iſles, and the 'till then unknown Riches of the World; yet in his *Eccleſiaſtes* he ſufficiently inſtructs us, that after ſo long and tedious a ſearch after the acquiſition of that which this World calls Happineſs, and the trial of all kinds of Worldly felicities, he at length had found nothing but labour and ſorrow, vanity and vexation of Spirit. Let us enquire of *Auguſtus Caſar*, who was Lord of the peaceable and well-compoſed World, and we ſhall find him weary of the troubles of his by-paſt Life, and preferring the quiet and ſecure condition of the vile and moſt abject perſon before his own, and judging it an happy hour, wherein, his Royalties being laid aſide, he ſhould be freed from the heavy burthen of Honour and Dignity, and ſuffered to live in peace and quietneſs with Men of the loweſt Rank and Condition. Let us alſo enquire of his Succeſſor in the Empire, *viz. Tiberius*, and he will tell us, that he held the Empire like a Woolf by the ears, and would willingly

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let go his hold, if he could do it without danger of being bitten thereby. That Man may juſtly accuſe Fortune, which having lifted him up into ſo high a Place, takes away the Ladder by which he aſcended, ſo that he cannot tell how to come ſafely down again. *Diocleſian*, in whom were lively drawn the lineaments of Princely Vertue and Wiſdom, yet preferr'd his Exile and Baniſhment before the Majeſty of the *Roman* Empire. Laſtly, let us enquire of *Charles* the Fifth, whom this Age judgeth to be the moſt happy of all thoſe who in many Ages had lived before him, and we ſhall find him curſing his Victories, the propagation of his Empire, his Triumphs, and his Trophies; and confeſſing that he had found more real pleaſure and advantage in one days Monaſtic Solitude, than in all the moſt ſplendid Triumphs of his whole Life. Now ſhall we judge theſe Men to be happy in this imaginary ſplendor of an Illuſtrious Life, when they themſelves judge themſelves to be unhappy therein? who think their only happineſs conſiſts in the diminution of their greatneſs, and in the low degree of a more humble Life? who in all the World can ſcarce find ſo much room where they may disburthen themſelves of their ſo vaſt and weighty fardel of Honour and Dignity; no Bed ſo fit and eaſie, in which they can compoſe themſelves to reſt and quiet. C That

Who is happy. That Man only is truly happy, who liveth contented with his preſent Condition; and of all Mortals he is the moſt unhappy, whoſe deſires are ſo ravenous, that nothing in this World can ſatisfie them, or ſettle his Mind in Peace and Quietneſs. *Pyrrhus* King of *Epirus* was therefore very miſerable, whoſe Covetouſneſs and Ambition nothing leſs could ſatisfie than the Empire of the whole World, and therefore put himſelf upon all that labour and travel, all thoſe dangers and hazards to ſeek that abroad, which he might have found at home, if he could have been content with his own *Epirus*. But that famous *Alexander* the Great was yet much more unhappy than he, who was Born to a Flouriſhing Kingdom, and by his Arms had Conquered the great Empire of *Perſia*, and as he thought all the known Worlds, yet wept, becauſe there were no more Worlds for him to Conquer; that with the Spoils thereof he might ſatisfie his inſatiable Ambition; and yet not long after was forced to be contented with a ſmall Grave, and to bury all his Ambition within the compaſs of ſix foot of ground. Briefly; Suppoſe theſe Ambitious Princes to be born and bred in the higheſt top of the *Alps*, to aſpire at the Conqueſt of Heaven, and to ſeek out all ways and means how they may come at it. Suppoſe any of them ſhould Conquer

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all the Kings of the Earth beſides, yet would they not be ſo ſatisfied, but would contend with God himſelf about the bounds of their Empire; their Ambition would know no limits nor meaſure, 'till God himſelf at that very juncture of time when they think themſelves at the higheſt round of the Ladder, with one blow of a Thunder-bolt, tumbleth them down head-long, breaks the Scepter in their hands, and oppreſſeth them with their own Diadem. In a word, all the felicity that is to be found in *Ambition* is, that wicked and ambitious Men graſping at greater things, bring down the greater evil upon their ownheads. Some there are who by climbing high hope to get out of the reach of all thoſe Evils, never conſidering that that which they ſo earneſtly ſtrive to attain unto, is nothing elſe but an heap of Evils. I paſs by the unfortunate lot of thoſe, who through the courſe of their whole lives have waited upon the Court, in hopes to taſt of its beneficence, and at laſt are not one jot the better for it. With great grief of Mind they may ſee how all things of their own accord flow in to him, who never did, nor ever pretended to take any pains for them; they may ſee alſo how the treaſure of thoſe who with great toil and labour have gathered it together, inſtead of being their gain, becomes a great loſs to them; they

may ſee how Riches are conferred upon ſome, who never ſtir a foot for them; whilſt others who make it their great care and ſtudy not only to get, but preſerve them; yet cannot with all their diligence keep them together. But theſe kinds of Men are of all others the moſt unhappy, becauſe they know their own miſery, and in their own opinion are really miſerable. At length let this Conſideration ſuffice, that all thoſe Riches, which Mammon that Helliſh Demon conferreth upon us, are only a bait, by which he may allure us into his Net; all theſe preſent and momentany things are wonderful ſnares, by which he deludeth all our labours and endeavours, which with ſo much ſweat we undergo, to heap up Riches; and that he at long run is the moſt unfortunate of Men, to whom Fortune, in the acquiſition of them, is moſt favourable.

But ſome will ſay, it is confeſs'd indeed, that the Covetous Man in the abundance of his Riches, enjoys no good, and that according to the Proverbial Saying, he as much wants what he hath, as what he hath not. It is acknowledged alſo that the Ambitious Man even when he thinks himſelf the moſt happy, is then the moſt unhappy. And that both of them get nothing more certainly to themſelves than helliſh pains, racks and tortures. Yet they ask, whether

whether ſome may not be found in the number of thoſe who attend upon the adminiſtration of Law and Juſtice, or do daily wait upon the perſon of a Prince, who enjoy their Wealth and Honour with pleaſure, who are not liable to any covetous deſires, or trouble of mind ariſing therefrom, who get and enjoy their Dignities with a quiet and peaceable Mind? Perhaps ſome ſuch there might be in former Ages, in the days of our Anceſtors, when ſome ſmall ſpark of candour and ingenuity was to be found among Men. But in this preſent and ſo deplorable ſtate of affairs, I do not ſee how this can be done; if Men intermeddle in publick buſineſs, they will do it either well or ill. If ill, they ſtir up Divine wrath againſt themſelves, and make their own Conſcience their Executioner, which will continually vex and torment them. But if well, they procure unto themſelves the hatred and enmity of Men, and thoſe not of the loweſt but higheſt rank, whoſe envy and malevolence will lay ſnares for them, and whoſe tyranny and cruelty will cruelly threaten them. If it be *popular applauſe* they aim at, they may perhaps pleaſe that furious Beaſt, but in ſo doing they muſt of neceſſity diſpleaſe themſelves. If Men be paſſionate Lovers of themſelves, they cannot chuſe but diſpleaſe God. But if they conform their own to God's Will,

they incur a thouſand dangers from the World, and procure an innumerable company of inconveniencies to themſelves; whence it is, that if you conſult the greateſt part of good Men, and ſuch who ſeem in ſome meaſure to be well content with their preſent Condition; you will find ſome willing to change a fine Coat for a Farmer's Jerkin; others who think thoſe live moſt happily who have nothing to live upon; others grievouſly complaining of the noiſe and tumult of the Court, and willing to take any occaſion to get rid of it. In a word, you will ſcarce find any one who is not weary of his own condition, who doth not envy another Man's, and who is not willing to change his own for that of another. There is none any where to be found, who are not tired with thoſe ſtudies, to which they had dedicated their whole lives, though they are ſtill willing and deſirous to live even to old Age. What therefore in ſuch a diverſity and contradiction of minds and humours ſhall we do? ſhall we avoid the ſociety of Men, that we may find out true and genuine humanity? ſhall we hide our ſelves in Woods and Thickets among wild Beaſts, that ſo we may ſhun thoſe troubles and perturbations of mind? Or laſtly ſhall we ſeparate our ſelves from that herd of Animals, which are called rational, or leave the World,

that

that we may eſcape the miſeries thereof? If by ſo doing we ſhould obtain that quiet and peaceable life which we ſo much deſire, is that a matter of ſo great moment? For it ſeldom happens that thoſe who ſo earneſtly deſire it, can ſo adjuſt their methods, as to enter into that way of living when they pleaſe; and thoſe that do, ſeldom find that peace and quietneſs which they expected therein. There are ſome who ſtrenuouſly apply their minds thereunto, but meeting with ſome rub or obſtacle in their way, they ſtop in the middle of their courſe, and proceed no farther. How mad and fooliſh are they who are ſtopped by that which in their own judgment they condemn? but how much more fooliſh and mad are they, who take counſel of him, whom they cannot but look upon as their deadly Enemy? Some there are who are perſuaded to engage in buſineſs upon this ſpecious pretence, becauſe it is their duty to ſerve the publick; but thoſe who ſuffer themſelves to be thus perſwaded, do not conſider that thoſe who perſwade them, do thereby endeavour to ſerve themſelves, not others; and that the far greateſt part of them would never engage in any publick buſineſs, if they did not thereby hope to ſerve their own private intereſt. Others are induced upon this account, becauſe they hope by the example of a good life, and

uncorrupted manners, to bring many to goodneſs. But let ſuch conſider, that in a City infected with the Plague, it oftner happeneth that an hundred of Men, and even Phyſicians themſelves die of the contagion, than that one infected Perſon is recovered and reſtored to health again. To commit our ſelves to ſuch an infected air is to tempt God, ſeeing no more preſent and ſafe remedy can be found for this evil, than to remove our ſelves from that place where it reigneth. It is found by experience, that it is not leſs difficult to draw one or two, like *Lot* and his Family in *Sodom*, from an evil cuſtom of living to a better, than it is to preſerve a ſtream of freſh water, which diſchargeth it ſelf in the Sea, from the ſaltneſs thereof. As for thoſe who excel others in wiſdom and knowledge, whoſe care it is to preſerve both their Souls and Bodies in health, who chuſe for themſelves a pure and uninfected air, far diſtant from that, in which wicked and ungodly Men live, who, having the Angel of God for their guide, do, according to the example of *Lot*, retire themſelves to *Zoar*, leaving the Court for the Countrey, where they may be at a diſtance from the World's flagitious way of living, who chuſe for themſelves ſome private places remote from the noiſe and tumult, and danger too of peſtiferous Cities, in which they give themſelves

themſelves to the ſtudy of ſome Science, or ſome ſerious contemplation: I readily grant that theſe Men are leſs expoſed to danger than others, but that they are altogether exempt from the common calamity, I cannot agree, becauſe they carry their danger along with them. They avoid indeed the Court, but the Court follows them; they do what they can to withdraw themſelves from the World, but the World purſueth them even unto death. And in that immenſe and vaſt circle of this world, they can ſcarce find out any hole, wherein to hide themſelves from the World; ſo deſirous is the World to deliver them over to death. But if by ſome ſingular bleſſing of God they happen to keep their heads above water in all theſe ſtorms and tempeſts, yet are they either preſſed with poverty, or vexed with ſome domeſtick ſtrifes and diſſentions, or grieved either with or for ſome familiar friend; ſo that ſome way or other they always find the World in them and about them.

But that which is moſt deplorable of all, being freed from theſe outward wars and troubles, we wage a civil and inteſtine war with and againſt our ſelves; the Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, Paſſion riſeth up in rebellion againſt Reaſon, Earth oppoſeth Heaven, and the World within ſtruggles hard for the World without us; which though

though it be ſhunned by us, yet having fixed its ſeat, it keeps a conſtant reſidence in the bottom of our hearts. But what do I ſay? when they themſelves, who with tragical and demure looks, and with ſpecious words, profeſs to renounce the World, do yet cheriſh themſelves with a vain ambitious hope of worldly praiſe and profit. They pretend to flie the World, and yet run into its embraces. Some ſhun Honours, and by that means make their way to Dignities, hoping for their ſeeming modeſty to be invited to accept of them. Others hide themſelves that they may be ſought after. So it comes to paſs, that the perſonated World often liveth among thoſe who ſeem to run from it. We are deceived, if we follow the multitude, for, in the greateſt throng and concourſe of People, the World, and the God of this World keep their Court; do we love ſolitude, he, who tempted Chriſt in the Wilderneſs, hath there his lurking places. Do we live with our ſelves, or within our ſelves, we may there as well as any where elſe find a contaminated World; nor have we any other way to mortifie it, but by dying to it. We live in the World, and the World in us, and therefore we have no other way to rid our ſelves of the World, but by departing from our ſelves; and this departure we call Death. We leave an infected City,

but

but we do not conſider that we carry infected Bodies along with us, and that we our ſelves are not the leaſt part of the Infection; ſo that though we wander thro' craggy Rocks, Deſarts, Mountains, that Infection is ſtill our inſeparable Companion. Whilſt we ſhun the Contagion of others, we labour under our own. We may flie the converſation of Men, and yet not abdicate the Man from our ſelves. The ſtormy and tempeſtuous Sea of this World we find to be very troubleſom, our heart akes, our ſtomach is ſick, whilſt we ſail through the waves thereof; and to free our ſelves from this trouble, we change that which is firm and ſolid, for that which is frail and brittle; we leave that which is truly great and good, for that which is baſe and little. And yet we cannot promiſe our ſelves any reſt or quiet, we are not one jot the better for our change, we are ſtill beaten upon by the ſame waters, and toſſed by the ſame waves. There is one and the ſame Haven to all Mortals, and that is Death, wherein they may reſt from their labours. The ſick Man may be laid in a Chamber near the Street or Market, the noiſe whereof is troubleſome to him; he may be removed from that to a more retired lodging, more remote from noiſe and tumult, and yet, for all that, his fever continues ſtill, and abates nothing of its heat and vigour.

gour. We may change our Bed, our Lodgings, our Houſe, and our Countrey, and yet find no abatement of our troubles; and the reaſon is plain, becauſe we every where find our ſelves, we do not endeavour to change our lives, but our place, we do not ſtrive to be other Men, but other where. We deſire ſolitude, that we may ſhun ſolicitude, that being at quiet, we may ſhake off the burthen of our cares. We deſire to be at a diſtance from the converſation of wicked Men, and for that end we change our places; but whitherſoever we carry our Bodies, thither alſo we carry our own Covetouſneſs, our own Ambition, and all the paſſions of our depraved minds; which a thouſand ways vex us, and a thouſand times a day call our minds back to the Onions and Garlick of *Egypt*. Theſe do always paſs the ſame Bridge that we do, and therefore on which ſide ſoever of the River we are, we have them to conflict with. But if we were able to conquer this Army of Vices, which eats up our Minds, we ſhould without doubt, find peace and quietneſs, not only in ſolitude, but in the greateſt throng and preſs of People.

The whole Life of Man in this World is a continual warfare. We cannot be ſecure either from external treacheries, or clandeſtine counſels and deceits. The *Greeks* had no ſooner raiſed their Siege, and found-

ed

ed a Retreat, but the wicked *Sinon* troubles all within the walls of *Troy*, and endeavours to betray the City to the *Greeks*. We muſt always watch therefore, and keep a ſtrict guard; we muſt always have our weapons in our hands, leſt by our ſecurity and too much confidence, we be every moment in danger to fall into the hands of our Enemies, out of which we have no probability to eſcape, no not by the benefit of Woods, or Rivers, or Mountains; no not though we incloſe our ſelves within a Preſs, or hide our ſelves in ſome Cave or Den under ground. Only Death, which by the ſeparation of Soul and Body, *i. e.* of the pure and clean part, from that which is impure and unclean, can do this; which whilſt they were conjoyn'd in one Perſon, could never agree, but were always brawling and at ſtrife between themſelves, 'till either the one or the other was totally ſubdued and brought under.

Now though I am not ignorant, how thoſe, who have given themſelves up to a ſolitary life, do ſpend their time; *viz.* either in the ſtudy of Sacred or Profane Literature, and of all Sciences and Diſciplines; and that theſe Men live far otherwiſe than thoſe Men who have wholly given themſelves up to Sports and Pleaſures, and thereby have render'd themſelves as brutiſh as thoſe Wild-beaſts which they hunt; yet even the wiſeſt of theſe Wiſe Men

Men muſt ſubſcribe to the cenſure of the wiſe *Solomon*, and confeſs with him, that all theſe things, when ſeriouſly conſidered, are nothingelſe but meer Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit. [a] Some there are who ſpend their whole time in Grammar and Rhetorick, *i. e.* in learning to ſpeak well, but do not in the leaſt think, nor allow themſelves any ſmall portion of their time to think, how they may live well. [b] Others there are who are ſo buſie in finding out the Riddles of a Logical *Sphinx*, that they examine all the trifles and impertinencies of Reaſons, to find out what Reaſon is, and in the ſearch thereof oftentimes loſe themſelves and their Reaſon too. [c] Others there are who by *Arithmetick* learn to divide every thing into the moſt minute Fractions, and yet are ſo bad Proficients, that they do not know how to divide a Half-penny with a Brother in way of Charity. [d] Many there are, who by the help of *Geometry* can give limits to grounds, and ſeparate them from one another, who can meaſure Cities and Countries, and yet cannot attain ſo far, as by any rule to meaſure themſelves. [e] The *Muſician* can bring different Voices and Tones into one harmony, and yet all the while have nothing that is harmonious in his own mind, nothing, which, by reaſon of the perturbations of his Mind, doth not run counter to all Muſical meaſures.

[a] *What Vanity there is in Sciences, or rather in the Perſons who ſpend their whole time in the ſtudy of Arts.*

[b] *Logick.*

[c] *Arithmetick.*

[d] *Geometry.*

[e] *Muſick.*

The

[f] The *Aſtronomer*, whilſt with fixed eyes he looketh up to Heaven, and ſeriouſly vieweth the motion of the Stars, ſtumbles and falls into the next Ditch; foretelling things to come, he loſeth thoſe that are preſent, though with fixed eyes he looks up to Heaven, yet hath he a Mind which is ſtuck faſt in the mire of this World. [g] The *Philoſopher* diſputeth gravely and accurately of the Nature of things, and yet cannot attain to the knowledge of himſelf. [h] The *Phyſician* takes care of the health of others, but as to the knowledge of the Diſeaſes of his own Mind, he is as blind as a Beetle; he very well knows the beating and alteration of his own Pulſe, but how to cure the burning Fever of his Mind (to which all his thoughts in the firſt place ought to have been converted) he knows nothing of it, nor in the leaſt regards it. [i] The *Hiſtorian* hath the *Theban* and *Trojan* Wars at his fingers ends, but is wholly ignorant of what more nearly concerns him. [k] The *Lawyer* maketh Laws for all the World, but he cannot make any Law for himſelf. [l] The *Divine* earneſtly contends for and diſputeth about the Faith, but never thinks of Charity; he ſpeaks much of God, but to help his Neighbour in time of need, he regards not. *Arts* and *Sciences* therefore do indeed weary the minds of Men with continual labour, but yield them no eaſe nor

[f] *Aſtronomy.*

[g] *Philoſophy.*

[h] *Medicin*

[i] *Hiſtory*

[k] *Law.*

[l] *Theology*

nor quiet. By how much our Minds are filled with knowledge, by ſo much we deſire more, nor doth any Science take away thoſe Controverſies, which diſtract the minds of Men, nor remove thoſe cares and troubles which perpetually vex them. *Arts* and *Sciences* do indeed poliſh the Minds of Men, but they do not free them from Vices and Diſeaſes. Learning doth indeed cultivate Men, but it doth not make them good, nor truly wiſe. To all which we may add, that by how much the greater knowledge we attain unto, by ſo much we know how ſmall proficients we have been; by how much the Mind is filled with knowledge, by ſo much the more it knows its own emptineſs; how great ſoever the knowledge of Men may be in this world, it is only of the leaſt part of thoſe things which we are ignorant of; ſo that the higheſt pitch which our wiſdom can attain unto, is to know our own ignorance and want of knowledge; the top of Man's perfection here, conſiſts in the knowledge of his imperfection, which whoſoever attaineth to, is Endued with greater wiſdom than others, and may be reckoned the moſt perfect. So that at length, we may conclude with the wiſe *Solomon*, that the fear of the Lord is both the beginning and end of Wiſdom, which Wiſdom in the World's eſteem is meer folly, and the followers

followers thereof worthy of deadly hatred. Thoſe therefore who are endued with this Divine fear of God need not fear any evil, becauſe whatever misfortune they may be liable to, it will certainly be changed for the better: Nor are they to hope for any good from the world, becauſe they muſt be at perpetual war with him, who is called the Prince of this world.

A Recapitulation of Old-Age, and all Vices.

Furthermore, in what manner ſoever we have ſpent our time, it matters not much. Old Age is at hand, it ſilently comes upon us unawares, it hangs over our heads, and wherever it finds us, whether in the throng of Men, or in ſolitude, ſeparated from the ſociety of Mortals, it there aſſaults us. Moſt Men do reckon, and bend all their thoughts to this one thing, that in Old Age being freed from all their cares, they may live quietly, and indulge the health and quiet of their wearied Bodies. But it uſually happeneth far otherwiſe, for, in Old Age Men are ſcarce ſo ſenſible of any thing, as of the great evil of their by paſt lives, that being a fitter time than any other, wherein to call to mind all thoſe Vices, wherewith the former part of their lives hath been contaminated. Then will they find how weak and unprofitable their Infancy hath been, how unbridled and luxurious their youth, whereby they brought upon themſelves weakneſs of joints, Palſies, Stone, and many other kinds of Diſeaſes, which by little and little, but with great pain, pull Men to pieces; then will they remember the great ſolicitude and anxious care which attended their Manhood, and how the ſame is now rewarded with blindneſs and deafneſs, and laſtly with the privation of all ſenſe,

except that of pain. There is no part of our Body but is mortgaged unto Death, we are all, and all together enſlaved thereunto; by reaſon whereof it happeneth to us, as it uſually doth to them who are in debt, who when they find themſelves unable to pay, are in perpetual fear of the day of payment. And when there is nothing of us left, which Death may not juſtly lay claim unto, yet even then our Vices not only live in us, but, whether we will or no, do daily grow ſtronger in us. The Covetous Man, though he hath one foot in the grave, yet his daily graſping at more wealth. The Ambitious Man, by his laſt Will and Teſtament, takes care to have a ſumptuous and pompous Funeral, and even after Death erects Monuments and Trophies to his Vices. The Laſcivious Perſon though he cannot go, his body being worn out, yet will he creep; though all his Vices have left him, yet can he not bid adieu to them. The Infant aſpireth to Youth, and having attained it, he loaths it; the Youth longs for a more mature Age, and in that he finds a preſent evil, and occaſion enough to bewail the ſlippery and fallacious pleaſure of the time paſt, nor doth he ſee what there is in growing Age that is ſo greatly to be deſired. That Man is much leſs wiſe than an Infant, who in vain bewails the loſs of by-paſt time which can never return, and yet hath laid aſide the remembrance of paſt miſery. And he is much more unhappy than a Youth, who when Death takes him out of a miſerable life, ſeeth nothing left for him but only matter of deſpair. But he, who from his blooming Age hath not only waged but ſtoutly managed a

War

War with the Fleſh and the World, who hath undergone ſo many and ſo great troubles, that he might learn to die, and leave the World before his time, and beſides all theſe evils ſeeth himſelf preſſed with that incurable diſeaſe of Old Age, and his fleſh waſted with ſo many troubles and diſeaſes; yet it often happens that he finds himſelf ſtronger in Spirit. Now what advantage I pray, can this Man expect from all this, ſave only this one, that he is now got into the Neighbourhood of Death, that an end of all his troubles and conflicts is now at hand, that his freedom from this Priſon in which he hath ſuffered ſo much all his life long, now draweth nigh. I omit in this place thoſe infinite Evils which encompaſs and afflict Men in the ſeveral periods of their Age, as the loſs of Friends and Relations, their baniſhment, proſcription, and many other ſuch like evils, which frequently occur in this World; one bewails the death of his Children, another on the contrary complains of the burthen of a numerous Offspring, this bemoans the death of his Wife, that complains of her living too long. It is a trouble to ſome to be in an high place, and no leſs grief to another, to be in any place under the higheſt. So many and ſo great are the cares and troubles which compaſs Men about in this World, that ſhould a juſt and full deſcription be given of them, the World it ſelf would ſcarce be able to contain it. In a word therefore, he who in the eſteem of others is the moſt happy of Men, when he compareth his happineſs with thoſe cares and ſorrows which attend it, findeth himſelf very unhappy; thoſe who admire the ſplendid condition of

others, if, but for three days, they had the trial of it themſelves, would quickly be weary of it. If Men would but conſider thoſe great inconveniencies which they do ſuffer in the acquiſition of pleaſures, and what torturing cares and anxiety of Mind they are expoſed unto for the preſervation of them, (I ſpeak of thoſe delights which are of ſome moment, and worth valuing, not of thoſe momentany ones which like Flowers fade and wither) they would quickly be convinced that the poſſeſſion of them is full of unhappineſs and miſery. Whence we may draw this neceſſary conſequence, that Infancy is only a fooliſh ſimplicity, Youth a vain heat, Manhood a troubleſom anxiety, and Old Age an incurable Diſeaſe; that our eyes are nothing elſe but tears, the pleaſures of the Mind only fevers, riches only torments, which continually torture and vex the Mind, honours only burthenſom vanities, quiet meer inquietude; To proceed from one Age to another, is to change one Evil for another, that which is lighter, for that which is heavier; ſo that as one wave beateth upon another, ſo one trouble comes upon the neck of another, 'till we arrive at the Haven of Death. Let us conclude then, that this Life is only a deſire of that to come, a grief for that which is paſt, a loathing of that which we have ſometimes thought to be ſweet and pleaſant, a longing deſire of that, the taſt whereof is yet unknown to us, a vain remembrance of that condition in which any one died, an uncertain hope of a future ſtate, in which there is nothing certain, ſave only the certainty of Death, and the uncertainty of the time thereof.

Behold

Behold Death haſtning towards us, ſee that approaching, which we ſo much fear. Let us conſider it, whether it be ſuch a thing as it is commonly thought to be, whether it be ſo much to be ſhunned as for the moſt part it is. We act like fearful Children, who are greatly affrighted with the ſight or thought of perſonated Ghoſts; one cauſe whereof is, becauſe we do not conceive it in our Minds as it really is in it ſelf, but as a ſad, ſorrowful and horrid thing, ſuch as Painters repreſent it upon Walls, and for that reaſon we ſhun it. With theſe and the like vain conceptions and imaginations we impoſe upon our ſelves, and leave no room to view it in its true and proper light. Let us ſtay a little, let us fix our foot, let us take up our ſtanding, where we may take a more accurate view of it on all ſides, and we ſhall find it quite another thing than that we have painted in our imaginations, to have a more beautiful face than hitherto we have thought it to have. Death gives a period to the labour and trouble of this Life, but of what Life? of that Life which is nothing elſe but meer calamity, and a perpetual ſtorm and tempeſt. Death therefore is the end of all our miſery and ſorrow, and an entrance into a quiet Harbour, wherein we may be ſafe from the danger of any dreadful ſtorm. Shall we then fear this which freeth us from danger, and brings us ſafely to our Port? But, you will ſay, there is grief in Death; no body denieth that; ſo there is in the cure of a wound; it is ſo ordered, that in all Humane Affairs there is no curing of one Evil but by another. Inciſion is neceſſary to

The conſideration Death no terrible.

reſtore a bruiſed and batter'd part of the Body to its former ſoundneſs.

The Argument taken from the difficulty of Life confuted.

But you will ſay, the way to Life by Death is a difficult paſſage. So is the entrance into any Harbour, it is uſually ſtrait and narrow, and not to be got into without great difficulty. There is ſcarce any thing of value in this World, that is to be attained unto without great pains and labour. The entrance indeed is difficult, but it is we that make it ſo; by approaching it with vexation and grief of heart, with a troubled and unquiet mind, with fluctuating thoughts and without deliberation. But if we bring with us a ſedate, quiet and well compoſed Mind to the conſideration thereof, we ſhall find no ſuch danger, nor any ſuch trouble in Death. What pain, I pray, is there in Death? doth it any thing more, or can it do any thing more, than affect and afflict our ſenſes? We look upon it as the ſource of all thoſe Evils with which we are then tormented; but we do not conſider how much greater Evils we have ſuffered, with how much greater torments we have been tired out, which yet have not conſigned us over unto Death; out of what pains and griefs we have eſcaped, under the preſſure of which we have wiſhed for Death. We give but little thanks to Death for delivering us from thoſe pains which we do then endure, nor do we well conſider, that whilſt we are ſpinning this thread of Life, whilſt we lengthen it out, we are on all ſides encompaſſed with pain and grief, nor that it is impoſſible that we ſhould finiſh our Lives without them.

We

We do not well underſtand what it is that afflicts us, it is not Death, which is the end of our ſo tedious and troubleſom Journey, but the end of our Lives that grieveth us; it is not the Haven we enter into, which is nothing elſe but a quiet retirement from ſtorms and tempeſts, and a paſſage to a bleſſed Life. We complain of Death, when we ſhould rather with tears bewail our Lives, much like thoſe who being recovered of ſome Chronical Diſeaſe blame their health, not the remainder of their Diſtemper, as the cauſe of their laſt pains and grief. What is it to be dead, but only to be no longer in this World? And is that ſo calamitous a matter? Did we never feel any pain, nor undergo any trouble whilſt we were in the World? Are we ever more like to Dead Men, than when we are faſt aſleep? And yet we never enjoy more reſt and quiet than when we are ſo. If therefore we be free from trouble and ſorrow whilſt we ſleep, why then do we impute thoſe pains we ſuffer, when the Soul leaveth the Body to Death, which ought rather to be imputed to Life, from whence they proceed, unleſs, by the ſame reaſon we fooliſhly accuſe that time in which we were not, for thoſe pains which we endure at our entrance into Life? But if no Man can enter into Life without pain, why ſhould it ſeem ſtrange that the end ſhould be anſwerable to the beginning? If from the beginning of our Generation we weave the Web of ſorrow, no wonder if in like manner we finiſh the ſame. If in that time when we were not, we were void of grief and trouble, but now that we ſee the light, we find our ſelves encompaſſed

It is life that afflicts us.

with them, and aſſaulted by them on every ſide; whether of theſe periods ſhall we accuſe for them, whether that time in which we were not, or that in which we are and ſhall be? we never think we ſhall die, 'till we find our breath fails us; but if we would rightly conſider the matter, we ſhould find our ſelves dying every day, every hour, yea every moment. We look upon Death as ſome unuſual thing, when as we carry nothing about with us, which is or ought to be more familiar to us. Our Life is ſcarce any thing elſe but a continual dying. Every day that is added to Life, is a day taken from it; ſo that the lengthning of it, is but the ſhortning thereof. We are no ſooner entred into one ſtep of Life, but we are ſo far onwards in our Journey towards Death. He that hath paſſed the third part of his Age, is a third part dead, and he that hath paſſed half, is half dead. The by-paſt time of our Lives is dead, the preſent liveth, but is dying, and that which is to come ſhall certainly fall under the power of Death. Whatſoever is paſt, is not, that to come is not as yet, and the preſent is, but in a moment is no more. In a word, our whole Life is nothing elſe but a kind of Death. Life is like a Candle lighted up in the Body, which in moſt Men is melted away by the wind, in many others it is ſo agitated, that it ſeems to be only half lighted. Some indeed there are, in whom it is preſerved whole and entire to the laſt. But howſoever it be, what quanity of light ſoever it giveth, by the ſame it conſumeth it ſelf. The brightneſs of it is a deflagration, its flame ſuddenly becomes a vaniſhing ſmoak, and its

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laſt blaze ends in a ſtinking ſnuff. The ſame is the Life of Man, for in him to live and die is the ſame thing. But if we call our laſt breath by the name of Death, we cannot deny the ſame name to the reſt, becauſe they all flow from the ſame Fountain. There is only one difference between this Life, and that which we call Death; that ſo long as that laſteth, it daily ſupplieth us with new matter of dying, but when that is ended, there is an end of us too, we are no longer in this World. This at length is confeſſed by all, that thoſe who believe Death to be the end of all their labour and travel, have no handle for fear to take hold on. Whoſoever is deſirous of a longer Life, is alſo deſirous of a longer Death. And he who feareth leſt Death ſhould come too ſuddenly upon him, feareth alſo to be too ſoon rid of that which occaſioneth Death. But to thoſe, who walk by more holy Rules, Death is quite another thing. For, they do not, like the Heathens, ſeek for conſolation againſt Death, but embrace it as a moſt certain remedy againſt all kind of afflictions. Nor do they ſtudy how they may deſpiſe it, or at leaſt not fear it, but rather how they may comfortably hope for it, and chearfully embrace it. Becauſe they do not look upon Death as the end of all pain and grief only, but as a ſtore-houſe of all good; not as the end of Life, but of Death, and the beginning of an Immortal Life. Well therefore did the wiſe *Solomon* ſay, *That the day of ones Death is much better than the day of his Birth.* And why ſo? Becauſe that day is not the laſt that ſhall ſhine upon us, but the beginning of a never

An Heavenly Life only good.

never failing day, and of a moſt happy Eternity. In that brightneſs we ſhall neither be concern'd for the trouble of time paſt, nor greatly deſire that to come; for then all things ſhall be preſent, and that preſent time ſhall never have an end. None ſhall then any more enſlave themſelves to thoſe vain and troubleſom allurements of the World, but every one ſhall then enjoy the true, real, and ſolid joys of the world to come. Nor ſhall any one think it worth his while, to heap up earthly things, being poſſeſſed of the eternal Seats of the Bleſſed in Heaven, having left behind them, and rejected all Earthly treaſure, which, by its weight, did for ſome time keep them under, and fixed down to the Earth. Blind Ambition ſhall not then inflame the Mind, they ſhall not then deſire to aſcend higher, nor climb the ſteps of greater Honours and Dignities; being fixed in a place far above Earth, and all Earthly things, they will laugh at the madneſs and folly of thoſe, whom once they admired; who for little or no cauſe wage war, who like Children contend for trifles. They will then find no Civil-war within themſelves, the Fleſh being then wholly ſubdued, the Spirit at full liberty, and enjoying a plenary and perfect Life, and all the paſſions and affections which formerly were ſo troubleſom and tumultuous, ſubmitting themſelves to the guidance and governance of Reaſon. The Soul being then freed from this naſty and filthy Priſon, in which by ſo long a ſpace of time it had contracted ſome ill habits, and was ſate down wearied with labouring under its own weight, ſhall now look up, and breath

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in a purer air, it ſhall acknowledge its old habitation, and remember its ancient Honour and Dignity. It is not ſo, O Friend, as you think, neither that Fleſh which thou feeleſt, nor that Body which thou toucheſt, is the Man. Man is the Inhabitant of Heaven, from whence he firſt came; that is his Countrey, that is the air he loveth to breath in. If you look upon the Body, you ſee the place of his baniſhment and proſcription; the Man doth properly conſiſt of Soul and Spirit, Man is of an Heavenly and Divine Nature, which hath nothing of rude matter in it; but the Body is but as the bark or ſhell, in which the Spirit being incloſed, there lieth hid, and if we deſire to be delivered therefrom, to live, and behold the light, that ſhell muſt be broken, that bark muſt be ſtripp'd off, and that caſe muſt be opened. By what reaſons can we perſwade our ſelves that we live and think, when in the mean time we are even ſpent and worn out with long ſloath and idleneſs, and can very difficultly ſtretch out our wings; ſo long as we are loaden and burthened with this maſs of Earth, we cannot flie towards Heaven. We ſee indeed, but it is with ſuch Spectacles as deceive us, we have eyes indeed, but they are covered with a white Film, we think we ſee, but we do but dream, and are mocked by a lying ſight, and fallacious apparition. Whatſoever we poſſeſs or know, it is all but meer Vanity, and meer Impoſture. It is only Death that can reſtore us both Life, and the ſenſe of Living. And yet ſo brutiſh are we, that we ſuſpect this, as if it were about to deſpoil us both of Life and Senſe. We call

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our ſelves Chriſtians, we believe there is, and after this Life ended, hope to enjoy a Bleſſed and Immortal Life, nor do we think Death to be any thing elſe but only a ſeparation of Soul and Body, and that the Soul returns to her reſt, there to enjoy perpetual Joys with God, in whom alone all good things, and all the treaſures of Happineſs are laid up; and that after the end of this World, it will be reſtored to its own Body, which ſhall never more be ſubject to corruption. With theſe kind of Heroical and moſt Noble Expreſſions we ſtuff whole Volumes, and yet when it comes to the puſh, we ſhake for fear, and tremble at the voice of Death, as if it were of all things the moſt horrible. And why ſo, I pray, if you believe thoſe things I have even now mentioned? Is it Happineſs and true Pleaſure that ye abhor? which, without this, we cannot pretend truly, nor ſcarce in part, to believe, we muſt look upon all that hath been ſaid upon this ſubject to be only idle talk, and no better than the vain Diſcourſes of Men in their Jollity. Some there are who conſtantly and with ſufficient confidence affirm, and will by no means be perſwaded to doubt, but that after this Life, they ſhall paſs to another far better, and much more excellent than this is; but when they conſider the ruggedneſs of the way, and the difficulty of the paſſage thereunto, both their conſtancy and confidence do very much abate, and they begin to fear and tremble at the thoughts of it. How broken and disjoynted are the Minds of thoſe Men, who fear not oftentimes to expoſe themſelves to Death for the preſervation of their Lives, who can be content

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to endure a thouſand pains for that cauſe, who to pleaſe others, are not afraid to expoſe themſelves to a thouſand wounds, who for the ſake of ſome vile, frail, and periſhing trifles, and ſuch as are not only ſubject to deſtruction themſelves, but alſo draw their owners into the ſame ſnare and ruine, do a thouſand times encounter Death, without attaining the End they aim at; and yet at the difficulty of one ſmall paſſage, by which they may procure unto themſelves a ſure and certain tranquility, and that not for one day, but for ever, not a common reſt, but ſuch an one as the Mind of Man is not able to comprehend, do ſhake and tremble, their courage fails them, and they ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by their own fears? In vain do they accuſe that grief which they ſuffer, this is only a frivolous excuſe for that little Faith, or rather that great incredulity under which they labour. For, how they can poſſibly perſwade either themſelves or others to the contrary I ſee not; when they chuſe rather to wear out themſelves with Aches in their Bones, with the pains of Gout or Stone, rather than by ſome more gentle kind of Death, to change this Life, without pain, for one far more happy. They had rather loſe Limb after Limb, and die by degrees, that they may miſerably out-live their own Senſes, Motions, and Actions, than by ſome ſudden Death to be delivered from thoſe ſo many and ſo great Evils, that they may live, and live happily for ever. But they have an excuſe ready for this, they only deſire their Lives may be prolonged, that they may learn to live. There are none who

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are ignorant of that, it is an Art which all have learned; It is not therefore the Art of Living, but the Art of Dying that we ought now to ſtudy and learn; which that we may happily do, let us learn every day to die to our ſelves. We cannot better fortifie our Minds againſt all aſſaults, than by looking upon every day as the laſt day of our Lives. But it happeneth out far otherwiſe, more is the grief, for there is no word more troubleſome to the Ears of Men, than the mention of Death. How fooliſh and inconſiderate are Men, who for the gain of a little money are hired to take up Arms; and expoſe their Lives to the Fortune and Chance of War? who in hope of Prey will firſt ſcale the Walls, and attempt thoſe Places, from which they have little or no hope to return in ſafety? ſo Prodigally do they hazard both their Bodies and Souls upon that account. But to exempt themſelves from the injuries and mockeries of Fortune, that they may gain things rare and incomparable, that they may enter into an Immortal Life, that we look upon as a dangerous and difficult paſſage; though all the danger and difficulty thereof is only in learning to know it right, *i. e.* in imprinting upon our Minds a right notion of it, conſidering, that whether we will or no, that paſſage at one time or other muſt be entred into, and paſſed by us. But, alas! Men are ſo much addicted to their own miſchief, that there are few or none to be found, (though oppreſſed with never ſo much miſery) who are willing to adventure upon this paſſage.

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Some alledge their Age, ſaying, they could more readily and willingly ſubmit to the Laws of Fate, if they had attained to the Fiftieth or Sixtieth year of their Age; but in their blooming years, in their flouriſhing youth, they think it hard to leave the world, and a difficult thing to die; that they would willingly know the world before they leave it. But theſe Men do not conſider how ignorant they are of all things; they do not think that the greateſt Age, if it be compared either with time paſt, preſent, or to come, is but like a point. Do ye not ſee, that when ye are arrived at that Age to which ye did aſpire, time paſt is as nothing, and ye burn with a greater deſire of that which is to come? The remembrance of time paſt will be troubleſome to you, the expectation of that which is to come will be very tedious, and the preſent will afford you but little or no ſolace and pleaſure. You will as earneſtly as before deſire a truce with Death. You hide your ſelves Month after Month from the ſight of your Creditors, and ſtill put off the time of Payment, and are as unready at the laſt as at the firſt to pay your Debt; ye do not conſider that one day it muſt be paid, and if ſo, then the ſooner the better. Try all the Pleaſures of the world, ye will find none new, ye will never quench your thirſt, though ye drink often; for, that Body which you carry about with you, is like that Tub of the Daughters of *Danae*, which was full of holes, and therefore could never be filled with water; it will ſooner be worn out with uſe, than you will be wearied with the uſe or rather

ther the abuſe of it. I do not ſee why you ſhould ſo greedily deſire long Life, unleſs it be that you may conſume it in vile and taſtleſs Pleaſures, or ſpend it in hunting after Vanities; you greedily deſire it, that you may prodigally ſpend it. In vain do you complain of a Court-Life, and the arrogancy of the Palace; that ſpecious and ſplendid pretence, by which you would ſeem more willing, to ſerve the Publick, to aſſiſt your Countrey, and to give up your ſelves wholly to the worſhip of God, will not acquit you from all blame. He who enjoyned you this Task, knows, without doubt, the day and hour in which it is to be done; he knows when you ought to labour, and when to reſt, and accordingly will direct his own work. But if he ſhould ſuffer you to be longer buſied in thoſe troubleſome affairs, you might perhaps faint under your labours. Now, if God be willing, out of his Grace, Goodneſs, and liberal Beneficence, to pay you your wages; if he be pleaſed to recall you from the Place of Suffering, and the Stage of Labour, and to give you as much for the work of half a day, as for a whole one; ought ye not then the more to praiſe his beneficence and liberality, and to return him the greater thanks for it? But if you will but enter into the inward Chambers of your Hearts, if you will but examine the Secrets of your own Conſciences, you will be forced to confeſs, that it is not the Cauſe of the Widow and Fatherleſs, nor the neglect of a Duty to a Son, a Parent, or a Friend, not unfaithfulneſs to the Com-

mon-wealth

mon-wealth, nor to God, by denying him the Worſhip which is due unto him, which you pretend and ſeem to deplore: No, it is ſomething elſe that you complain of. There are Houſes and Gardens, which trouble your Minds, there are imperfect Platforms of Edifices and Buildings which diſtract your Thoughts; your imperfect and immature Life will not ſuffer your Mind to fly higher than theſe; which you have no hope to perfect, no not by length of time; whereas if you more accurately weigh the matter, even one moment of time may ſuffice for the perfecting of it, if you ſeriouſly conſider with your ſelves, that when this Life ſhall haſten to an end, all thoſe things will be of no concern, provided you do but make it your buſineſs to finiſh your Courſe well and happily. Now to finiſh our Courſe well, what is it elſe, but to haſten to our End without trouble, to obey the will of God readily, to follow him as our Guide cheerfully, and not to do any thing that may make it be thought that we are unwillingly dragg'd thither by inexorable Fate or inevitable Deſtiny. Then may we be ſaid willingly to meet our Death, when we approach thereunto with a ſure hope, without fear or doubting; when we are well perſwaded that after this preſent Life ended, we ſhall enjoy another far better, and much more excellent. But this hope and expectation of a better Life muſt be kindled and nouriſhed in us by a true fear of God, whom if we truly fear, we ſhall not need to fear any thing in this world, but may hope all things in that to come.

For, whoſoever is poſſeſſed of this ſure Hope and lively Faith, Death it ſelf will be both pleaſant and grateful to him; knowing for certain that by the ſeparation of Soul and Body he ſhall obtain a quiet Retirement, in which no kind of Happineſs ſhall be wanting to him. And though there may be ſome pain in Death, yet will it be allayed with a far gteater pleaſure. When the mixed Cup of Hope and Sufferance ſhall be drunk up, the ſting of Death will have no more ſtrength, which is only troubleſom and pungent; by vertue of our own fear. I may add this alſo; that he, who hath thus fortified his Mind, ſhall not only not be troubled or diſpirited by any Image of Evil which Death offereth to his imagination, but all the misfortunes of this Life, which are wont to weaken the Minds of Men, and all fear of trouble and moleſtation, ſhall then be deſpiſed by him, and ſet at naught. For, how can he be ſaid to fear, who hopeth to die? Doth he fear to be Baniſhed from his Countrey? No, he knows that he hath a better Countrey elſewhere, from which none can baniſh him; he looks upon this World only as an Inn, and himſelf as a Gueſt there; where, though he may have a Being at preſent, yet doth he not take it for his abiding place. Doth he fear a Priſon? He can have no more grievous nor ſtraiter confinement than that of his own Body, than which he can meet with none more loathſom, nor liable to thicker Darkneſs; nor can he any where meet with greater

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torments and vexations than he finds there. Doth he fear leaſt any one ſhould deliver him over to Death? that is it which he daily hopes for, and greatly deſires. Which whether it happen by Fire, or Sword, or Famine, or Sickneſs; whether it linger for the ſpace of three years, or come to paſs in three days, or three hours it matters not; he is not concern'd by what way, or when he leaveth this troubleſome Life, being always ready fitted and well prepared for his Journey, and being well aſſured that as ſoon as he departs out of this, he ſhall enter into an Happy and Immortal Life. The menaces of Death only are levelled againſt him, and this is that which he daily expects and hopes for. Death is looked upon as the greateſt and moſt grievous of all puniſhments, but he looks upon it as the beſt of all thoſe things that are to be hoped for. The Threatnings of Tyrants are to him in place of Promiſes, the Swords of moſt deadly Enemies are not unſheathed againſt him, but for him; he eſteemeth the threats of Death, as the commination of Life, and that by the moſt mortal wounds, he ſhall be conveyed to an happy Immortality. Whoſoever doth truly revere God, ſtands not in fear of Death; and he that is free from that fear, is not afraid of the greateſt and moſt grievous Evils of this Life. But ſome will ſay, if Death be in the number of thoſe things that are to be deſired, then it will follow, that Life is to be expoſed and precipitated, that we may be delivered from the numerous

Evils thereof, and obtain ſo much Good thereby. Though that ſort of Solicitude doth not at all affect me, yet that there are ſome who being encouraged with the ſure promiſe of ſo great and good things hereafter, are willing to haſten towards Death; but though the Spirit may greatly long for that Life, yet is it kept down, and hindred from flying thither by the weight of its Earthly Body. But that which is here objected, is a perfect inconſequence, and can in no wiſe be drawn from the premiſes. That the Fleſh is to be tamed and kept under by accuſtoming our ſelves to the thoughts of Death, is readily granted; that we ought to withdraw our ſelves from the World, is not denied; but that we may, when we pleaſe, take our ſelves out of the World, I cannot agree; becauſe that is not a thing in our own power. A Chriſtian, as he ought not to ſhun Death for fear of dying, ſo neither ought he preſumptuouſly to precipitate his Life in hopes of a better; though he be expoſed to continual aſſaults of grief and ſorrow whilſt here, yet can he not without reproach and infamy forſake the Poſt in which he is placed. But when his Chief Captain ſhall think fit to recall him thence, then may he readily obey, and retire without reproach or infamy. A Chriſtian is not born for himſelf, but for God, to him he liveth, and prolongeth his Life, till it ſhall pleaſe God to give him the reward of a well-ſpent Life; it is free for God to take it from him, but not for him to lay it down when he pleaſeth. But if it ſhall happen in Youth, in the Flower of thy Age, do as Mariners uſe to do, give thanks

unto

unto God that with a proſperous gale he hath brought your Ship to Harbour ſooner than you expected. But if Death delays its coming 'till Old-Age, give thanks to God alſo, becauſe though your Voyage hath been tedious, yet have you not met with ſo many Storms and Tempeſts as might have befallen you in that time. In the mean time do you neither make too much haſt, nor create delays, for the Wind is not in your power: Shipwreck may be then neareſt, when to ſhun it, you make too much haſt into your Port. Before Mid day God is pleaſed, by Death, to give reſt to ſome from their Labours, to others at that time, and to many not 'till late at night. Some he employs no longer than their firſt ſweat, others he roaſts with the heat of the Sun, and ſome he boileth down, 'till they are altogether dry, and have no juice left in them. Yet he is not forgetful of any of his Servants, he hath a time of reſt for them all, and giveth to every one their reward in due ſeaſon. Nor is any one deprived thereof, unleſs he forſake his Poſt before he be recalled, leave his work unfiniſhed, and require his Wages before they are due. Wherefore we ought always to acquieſce in his will, who in the midſt of all our pains and labour can, and often doth, refreſh us with ſweet and quiet reſt. Our Life ought not to be tedious or odious to us, becauſe of the Labours which we undergo therein; for, that would betray a ſluggiſh and abject Mind; nor is it to be loved, becauſe of the Pleaſures thereof; for, that would betray our folly and madneſs. But let us ſerve our ſelves, that we may the better ſerve God; who, after this

Life

Life ended, will abundantly bleſs us with true reſt and quietneſs, and pleaſures for evermore. Death is not to be fled from, and indeed it is vain and Childiſh ſo to do, for, it will certainly either meet us in our flight, or purſue us at the heels. Nor is it to be ſought after, leſt we incurr the Character of raſh and preſumptuous Perſons; for no Man, though he would, can die when he will. There is as much of deſpair in the one, as of floath and puſillanimity in the other; and ſeeing both of them are within the confines of Vice, neither of them can deſerve either the name of, or praiſes due to Fortitude and Magnanimity. It is enough for us conſtantly, and every hour, to expect Death, that we may not be ſurprized by it, nor overwhelmed with it, like unwary and imprudent Perſons; for, as there is nothing more certain than Death, ſo there is nothing more uncertain than the hour of Death. This is known to God alone, who is the only Author both of Life and Death; to whom that we may all both Live and Die, ought to be the only ſtudy and buſineſs of our whole Lives.

We ought ſo to Die, that we may Live, and ſo to Live, that we may Die Happily.

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